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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/695,647	10/29/2003	Espen Hauge	43315-201405	4080

23517 7590 10/13/2005  
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EXAMINER

THOMPSON, KENNETH L

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3672

DATE MAILED: 10/13/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

## Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/695,647

Applicant(s)

HAUGE ET AL.

Examiner

Kenn Thompson

Art Unit

3672

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

### Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

### Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 29 October 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-3,6-11 and 18-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 4,5 and 12-17 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

### Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 29 October 2003 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

### Attachment(s)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)                        | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)                     |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)                | Paper No(s)/Mail Date: _____  |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>10/03; 4/05</u>   | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                                    |

## DETAILED ACTION

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1, 6, 8, 11 and 18-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Nilsen et al., U.S. 6,872,239.

Regarding claims 1 and 8, Nilsen et al. discloses fluid selectively conducted (from 7) to a gravity separators (col. 6, lines 59 – col. 7, line 9) and subsequent gravity separators (via 14).

As to claim 6, Nilsen et al. discloses the fluid subjected to gas removal (at 7).

As to claim 11, Nilsen et al. discloses an emulsion breaking unit in series with the separators (col. 3, lines 7-21).

As to claim 18, Nilsen et al. discloses a gas separator (7) upstream the gravity separators (11).

As to claims 19 and 20, Nilsen et al. discloses in column 1, lines 14-22) a subsea system and the fluid comprising oil phase and water phase.

Claims 1-3 and 7-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Morgan et al., U.S. 6,315,813.

Regarding claim 1-3 and 8, Morgan et al. discloses a means for (33,22-24) conducting fluid selectively (via 33, 23, 24) to first gravity separators (14,34) in parallel and from one of the first separators to a second gravity separator (1).

As to claim 7, Morgan et al. discloses oil and water phase fluid to the first separators (34) and a rich phase oil (less gas to 26) obtained from the separators.

As to claim 9, Morgan et al. discloses three gravity separators (1,34,14) and selective connection (33, 24, 23, 22) or isolation of any two separators.

As to claim 10, Morgan et al. discloses means for connecting (33) individual first gravity separators with each other.

### ***Allowable Subject Matter***

Claims 4, 5 and 12-17 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter:

The prior art of record does not disclose or suggest all the claimed subject matter including emulsion breaking unit upstream the second separation step.

The prior art of record does not disclose or suggest all the claimed subject matter including a conduit from the well to each gravity separator.

The prior art of record does not disclose or suggest all the claimed subject matter including each separator having an outlet to a treatment step different from gravitational settling.

### ***Conclusion***


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Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Kenn Thompson whose telephone number is 571 272-7037. The examiner can normally be reached on 7:00 am - 4:30 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David J. Bagnell can be reached on 571-272-6999. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

03 October 2005



Kenn Thompson  
Primary Examiner  
Art Unit 3672